

A REGIONAL SOLUTION TO A NATIONAL PROBLEM



What's the story in Virginia?

- Approximately 1 million uninsured (14.9%)¹
- Virginia ranks 50th in state budget allocations to Medicaid²
- Commonwealth's Indigent Care Program, serving individuals with household incomes less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, through the two academic medical centers (VCU and UVA). Funded by disproportionate share dollars (DSH) matched with state General Funds
- Large network of free clinics and Federally-qualified health centers
- Governor Mark Warner and his administration have placed an emphasis on S-CHIP enrollment

What are the details in Richmond?

Richmond is a city of over 200,000 inhabitants, and the metropolitan area includes about 853,000 residents³. According to a 2001 telephone survey performed by the Virginia Health Care Foundation, the rate of uninsurance in the greater Richmond area is 17.2%⁴. Of the uninsured in the Richmond area, 67% live in households with a full-time worker⁴; and approximately 48,000 have household incomes under 200% of the Federal Poverty Level⁵. In addition, Richmond has experienced a tremendous influx of persons of Hispanic decent in recent years – at least at 250% increase since 1990⁶.

What is REACH?

Richmond **E**nhancing **A**ccess to **C**ommunity **H**ealthcare is a consortium dedicated to improving care for persons without health insurance.

Until 2000, safety net providers in the Richmond area operated independently with little success working together. Recognizing the need to join forces to address systemic problems affecting the existing safety net, VCU Health System and community-based health centers began meeting to discuss how to minimize gaps in care. REACH, which formed as a result, promotes collaboration among its members and others to strengthen the existing safety net; maximize the impact of limited resources; and, develop an integrated healthcare delivery system for area residents without health insurance. Through its initiatives, including a Federal Healthy Communities Access Program (HCAP) grant, REACH works with community partners to accomplish its goals.

Who are our core partners?

Core partners include four (4) free clinics, two of which are faith-based; a Federally-qualified health center; a health care for the homeless site (also Federally-supported); the City health department; a respite site for sick or injured homeless persons; and, the academic medical center. REACH also has strong partnerships with the two (2) local private health systems, City social services and a variety of other community-based organizations.

¹ 2001 Health Access Survey, Virginia Health Care Foundation

² Kaiser Family Foundation

³ 2000 Census, US Census Bureau

⁴ 2001 Health Access Survey, Virginia Health Care Foundation

⁵ 2003, Community Health Resource Center

⁶ 2003, Immigrant Health Study, Central Virginia Health Planning Agency/Bon Secours Richmond Health System

What does REACH do?

- Data resource for individuals and organizations interested in health care for persons without health insurance
- Assess community health needs
- Identify strategies to address community health needs
- Coordinate efforts across community-based health care providers for economies of scale
- Assist individuals with applications for various health programs and low-cost health care options

What are our successes to-date?

- REACH incorporation and Board development
- *MORE Access* development and implementation
- Directory of area human services providers (www.reachva.org/search.cfm)
- HIPAA Technical Assistance
- Effective public relations
- Broad community involvement

What are current and future initiatives?

- *MORE Access*
- Perinatal Care Network
- Access to Care
- Behavioral Health Task Force
- Medication Assistance Program
- Advocacy
- Develop data warehouse capacity
- Add pharmacy, care coordination and referral modules to *MORE Access*
- Develop care coordination services

What are some useful technical resources?

- Other communities
- Communities Joined in Action (www.cjaonline.net)
- Association for Community Health Improvement (www.communityhlth.org)
- HRSA Technical Assistance through the Healthy Communities Access Program

MORE Access: An on-line financial screening tool

Richmond Enhancing Access to Community Healthcare (REACH – www.reachva.org) has developed a web-based tool to help patients without adequate health coverage receive needed healthcare services. *MORE Access* allows staff at health care providers in the Richmond area to easily determine whether a patient meets the criteria for sliding scale healthcare services, FAMIS and Medicaid for women and children.

How it Works

REACH worked with Xperts, Inc., a Richmond-based information technology firm, to develop *MORE Access*.

- Participating safety net providers' staff are given password-protected access the *MORE Access*, which is accessed via the Internet.
- Based on the information provided by the patient, *MORE Access* automatically estimates whether a patient appears to meet criteria for area sliding scale fee healthcare, Virginia's Children's Health Insurance programs (e.g., FAMIS and Medicaid) and Medicaid for pregnant women.
- Patients do not have to repeat the information sharing process, and have more efficient access to healthcare services. The database processes information on uninsured patients, and it can be shared among other participating providers.
- For patients applying for Virginia's Children's Health Insurance Programs (e.g., FAMIS and FAMIS Plus) or Medicaid for pregnant women, the database automatically puts their information onto the Commonwealth's application, which can be printed and submitted with appropriate documentation to the Department of Social Services.
- Three (3) outreach workers, two of whom are fluent in English and Spanish, are available to help patients collect documentation required to substantiate their financial situation (e.g., pay stubs, copies of rent checks, W-2s).

Patients accessing healthcare through most area safety net providers must demonstrate their inability to pay for health services by undergoing a financial screening. Most providers use the same information to assess a patient's financial status; however, the guidelines for each sliding fee or public program are different. Without *MORE Access*, patients who went to more than one safety net provider must undergo multiple financial screenings, often presenting the same financial information and documentation several times. *MORE Access* minimizes the duplication of efforts by patients and safety net provider staff.

Eleven providers in the Richmond area are using *MORE Access*, including Vernon J. Harris Health Center; North District Community Health Clinic; CrossOver Ministry; Fan Free Clinic; Bon Secours Richmond Health System; Daily Planet Health Care for the Homeless; Richmond City Department of Public Health; Irvin Gammon Craig Health Center; Greater Richmond Homeless Respite; Virginia Commonwealth University Health System; and, HCA Richmond Hospitals.

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